

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this Application and entry of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

The title of the application and the Abstract of the Disclosure have been amended to reflect the nature of the invention presently being claimed.

Claims 17-28 are pending in this application.

Claims 17-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ding et al. (US Patent 6,284,305) or Hossainy (US Patent 6,555,157). Applicant respectfully traverses this ground of rejection.

As admitted by the Examiner, Ding et al. “fails to specifically teach dipping while rotating the stent.” The claims require rotating the stent with respect to the coating liquid while both immersing and withdrawing the stent from the coating liquid. Ding only teaches spraying a rotating stent. Rotation of a stent being sprayed from a single spraying source is required in order to achieve uniform coating. There is no relationship between such rotation during spraying, and rotation with respect to a coating liquid while the stent is both inserted into and withdrawn from the coating solution. Accordingly, the present invention is deemed to be unobvious over Ding et al.

Hossainy teaches a method of coating a stent by first dipping or spraying a stent with a coating material, then subjecting the wet-coated stent to centrifugal force applied by rotation at high speed around a central axis of a centrifuge. The present invention is substantially different than the process taught by Hossainy in a number of respects. First, as mentioned above with respect to Ding et al., there is no mention or suggestion that the stent be rotated with respect to the coating liquid during the coating process, including both immersion and withdrawal of the stent from the coating liquid. Second, the rotation process of Hossainy is about a central axis of the centrifuge, not about a longitudinal axis of the stent. There would be no reason for one skilled in the art to apply the teaching of Hossainy to arrive at Applicant’s invention.

Claims 17-28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hossainy ‘157, in view of Ding et al. ‘305. Applicant respectfully traverses this ground of rejection.

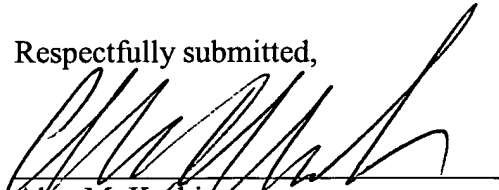
As mentioned above with respect to the two references cited, Ding et al., which is primarily directed at coating with an undercoat and a topcoat, teaches rotation of a stent only

during a spraying, not a dipping, process. Hossainy teaches centrifuging an already wet-coated stent (rotation about a central axis of the centrifuge, not a longitudinal axis of the stent). For sake of argument, even taking these two references together, one would not arrive at Applicant's invention. Furthermore, there would be no motivation on the part of the skilled practitioner to combine the teachings of these references as they are directed at different problems in the coating art. Applicant maintains that, in view of the above, the present invention is unobvious over Ding et al. in view of Hossainy.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes all the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned at telephone (707) 543-5021.

Respectfully submitted,



Alan M. Krubiner
Registration No. 26,289
Attorney for Applicant

Medtronic Vascular, Inc.
3576 Unocal Place
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Facsimile No.: (707) 543-5420